

Quick Tip Sheet

Polling Place Access

Polling Place Accessibility in Michigan

Since spring of '04, a coalition of disability advocacy organizations from around the state have been offering their services to election officials who wanted assistance in assessing the accessibility of polling places within their jurisdictions. As of April '06, over 450 polling places amounting to over 10% of all polling places in the state have been visited by disability advocates.

The results of these surveys show that of all sites visited:

- 58% had no or inadequate accessible parking.
- 32.2% needed ramps or curb cuts.
- 29.8% had impassable or otherwise noncompliant doorways.
- 16.4% had major obstacles in the 'accessible' route.
- 5.3% needed directional signage to the alternate entrance.
- 2.1% had a noncompliant or nonworking lift/elevator.

How Much Accessible Parking is needed?

The number of accessible parking spaces depends on the total number of spaces in the lot or structure (4.1.2(5)(a)&(b)): (Accessible parking spaces shall be at least 96 inches wide.)

<u>Total parking in lot</u>	<u>Required minimum of accessible spaces</u>
1-25	1
26-50	2
51-75	3
76-100	4
101-150	5
151-200	6
201-300	7
301-400	8
401-500	9
501-600	2% of total

Except as provided below access aisles adjacent to accessible spaces shall be 60 in (1525 mm) wide minimum. Two accessible spaces may share a common access aisle.

One in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated "van accessible" as required by 4.6.4. The vertical clearance at such spaces shall comply with 4.6.5. All such spaces may be grouped on one level of a parking structure.

What is required for Ramps and Curb Cuts?

Any part of an accessible route with a slope greater than 1:20 shall be considered a ramp and shall:

- A. ***Slope and Rise.*** The least possible slope shall be used for any ramp. **The maximum slope of a ramp in new construction shall be 1:12.** The maximum rise for any run shall be 30 in (760 mm) (see Fig. 16). Curb ramps and ramps to be constructed on existing sites or in existing buildings or facilities may have slopes and rises as allowed in 4.1.6(3)(a) if space limitations prohibit the use of a 1:12 slope or less.
- B. ***Clear Width.*** **The minimum clear width of a ramp shall be 36 in (915 mm).**
- C. ***Landings.*** Ramps shall have level landings at bottom and top of each ramp and each ramp run. Landings shall have the following features:
 - (1) The landing shall be at least as wide as the ramp run leading to it.
 - (2) The landing length shall be a minimum of 60 in (1525 mm) clear.
 - (3) If ramps change direction at landings, the minimum landing size shall be 60 in by 60 in (1525 mm by 1525 mm).
- D. ***Handrails.*** If a ramp run has a rise greater than 6 in (150 mm) or a horizontal projection greater than 72 in (1830 mm), then it shall have handrails on both sides. Handrails are not required on curb ramps or adjacent to seating in assembly areas. Handrails shall comply with 4.26 and shall have the following features:

- (1) Handrails shall be provided along both sides of ramp segments. The inside handrail on switchback or dogleg ramps shall always be continuous. The clear space between the handrail and the wall shall be 1 - 2 in (38 mm). Gripping surfaces shall be continuous. Top of handrail gripping surfaces shall be mounted between 34 in and 38 in (865 mm and 965 mm) above ramp surfaces. Ends of handrails shall be either rounded or returned smoothly to floor, wall, or post. Handrails shall not rotate within their fittings.

Any part of an accessible route with a curb shall

- (1) The curb ramp is the basic unit of accessibility in a pedestrian circulation network.
- (2) Accessibility standards set the maximum slope of a new curb ramp at 1:12.
- (3) Where new sidewalks or streets are constructed or existing pedestrian or vehicular ways are altered, curb ramps or other sloped areas must be provided at intersections with curbs or other barriers to use.

What is required for an Accessible Doorway?

- A. **Doorways shall have a minimum clear opening of 32 in** (815 mm) with the door open 90 degrees, measured between the face of the door and the opposite stop. Openings more than 24 in (610 mm) in depth shall comply with 4.2.1 and 4.3.3.
- B. **Thresholds at doorways shall not exceed 3/4 in** (19 mm) in height for exterior sliding doors or 2 in (13 mm) for other types of doors. Raised thresholds and floor level changes at accessible doorways shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2.

C. **Door Hardware.** Handles, pulls, latches, locks, and other operating devices on accessible doors shall have a shape that is easy to grasp with one hand and does not require tight grasping, tight pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate. Lever-operated mechanisms, push-type mechanisms, and U-shaped handles are acceptable designs. When sliding doors are fully open, operating hardware shall be exposed and usable from both sides. Hardware required for accessible door passage shall be mounted no higher than 48 in (1220 mm) above finished floor.

D. **Door Opening Force.** The maximum force for pushing or pulling open a door shall be as follows:

- (1) Fire doors shall have the minimum opening force allowable by the appropriate administrative authority.
- (2) Other doors.
 - (i) Exterior hinged doors: (Reserved).
 - (ii) Interior hinged doors: 5 lbf (22.2N)
 - (iii) Sliding or folding doors: 5 lbf (22.2N)

*These forces do not apply to the force required to retract latch bolts or disengage other devices that may hold the door in a closed position.

****Automatic doors are not required under the ADA.**

E. **Two Doors in Series.** The minimum space between two hinged doors or pivoted doors in a series shall be 48 inches plus the width of any door swinging into the space.

What are the major obstacles to look out for when maintaining an Accessible Route?

The building you chose for your polling site must have a route of travel that does not require the use of stairs. It must be stable, firm and slip-resistant. It should the maximum extent feasible; coincide with the route for the general public.

- A. The minimum width of the route shall be 36 inches.
- B. Protruding Objects. Objects that project from walls (e.g. telephones) with their leading edge between 27 in and 80 in above the finished floor shall protrude no more than 4 in into the walks, halls, corridors, passageways or aisles.

Interior route:

- A. Accessible route to all public spaces at least 36 inches.
- B. Controls - reach range - side reach 54 inches; forward reach 48 inches; and reachable height 15 inches – front approach and 9 inches - side approach.
- C. Seats, Tables and Counters - Spaces for wheelchair seating, Table tops and counters between 28 and 34 inches. Knee space 27 inches high and 30 inches wide and 19 inches deep and main counter no more than 36 inches in height.

What type of Directional Signage is needed to direct individuals to the Alternate Entrance?

- A. **Mounting Location and Height.** Where permanent identification is provided for rooms and spaces, signs shall be installed on the wall adjacent to the latch side of the door. **Where there is no wall space to the latch side of the door, including at double leaf doors, signs shall be placed on the nearest adjacent wall. Mounting height shall be 60 in (1525 mm) above the finish floor to the centerline of the sign.** Mounting location for such signage shall be so that a person may approach within 3 in (76 mm) of signage without encountering protruding objects or standing within the swing of a door.
- B. **Symbols of Accessibility.** Facilities and elements required to be identified as accessible shall use the international symbol of accessibility.

Do we have to provide a Lift or Elevator Access?

Only if it is readily achievable, does a polling site have to provide a lift or elevator. So, in most cases, no lift or elevator will be required. However, if one already exists in the polling site, it is a violation of the ADA to have it not available and working for those individuals who cannot access the polling site by means of stairs.